



City Manager Office
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Item # 23

City of Santa Ana
20 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92701
Staff Report
September 19, 2023

TOPIC: Councilmember-Requested Item Policy

AGENDA TITLE

Councilmember-Requested Item Policy

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adopt a resolution approving the City Council Policy Regarding Councilmember-Requested Items.

DISCUSSION

Background

At the August 16, 2022 meeting, Councilmember Phan added the following councilmember requested item: *Discuss and Consider Directing Staff to Implement a Process that Will Allow the City Council to More Efficiently and Effectively Present Councilmember Requested Items on the Agenda*. There was consensus among the City Council to proceed with this item. At the March 21, 2023 meeting, staff presented an informational report to the City Council with a draft City Council Policy Regarding Councilmember-Requested Items. Members of the City Council discussed making minor changes to the draft policy, all of which have been incorporated to the final policy (Exhibit 2).

City Council Legislative Authority and City Council Meeting Agendas

As the legislative body of the City of Santa Ana, the City Council's role is to legislate—or to set policy. The City Council is empowered to enact local laws, approve programs, appropriate funds, establish local taxes, and approve other local government actions through its legislative authority. This function is primarily carried out through City Council action at regularly scheduled City Council meetings. City Council meetings are guided by an agenda, which consists of items relating to the City of Santa Ana local government. Matters of policy are ordinarily determined by a majority vote of the City Council on each agenda item. In some cases, a two-thirds vote of the City Council is required (e.g. for appropriation adjustments). Under the Council-Manager form of government, under the leadership of the City Council, the City Manager sets the agenda and the City Clerk prepares the agenda.

Councilmember-Requested Items

Section 411 of the Santa Ana City Charter states, in part, that “any member of the City Council may place items on the City Council agenda to be considered by the City Council.” Councilmember-requested items are discussion items only; the City Council does not take any action. Councilmember-requested items may include any issue within the City Council’s jurisdiction, such as requests for policy research, drafting resolutions and ordinances, and providing direction to City staff relating to the implementation and/or evaluation of a policy.

The City Council Handbook, which is prepared annually by the City Manager’s Office and City Clerk’s Office, provides administrative guidance on certain procedures relating to the City Council, including councilmember-requested items. Regarding councilmember-requested items, the current edition of the City Council Handbook states the following:

COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

Any member of the City Council may place items on the agenda that are staff directives or policy changes. They are listed on the agenda pursuant to Charter § 411. Items may be added by emailing the Clerk of the Council and City Manager.

The “Council Agenda Item” provision of the City Council Handbook is the only written guidance that exists relating to councilmember-requested items.

At the August 16, 2022 meeting, members of the City Council discussed the creation of a policy to provide guidance to the City Council, with the goal of presenting councilmember-requested items to facilitate efficient and effective discussion among the members of the City Council. Specifically, the City Council discussed the creation of a policy that might include the following elements:

- Each councilmember-requested item is accompanied by a written report that outlines the following:
 - Topic: Use plain language to describe the topic of the report.
 - Subject: Describe the action and subject of the report.
 - Councilmember-Requested Item Title: Describe the action you are requesting, which relates to the topic of the report.
 - Discussion: Provide a brief chronology of the item. Identify issues. If there is a provision of law, rule, policy, and/or previous City Council action related to this item, note it in this section. Provide a brief explanation of the item, focusing on data collection, analysis, and evaluation.
- Prior to the report being published as part of the City Council meeting agenda, the councilmember informs the City Manager, City Clerk, and City Attorney of the councilmember-requested item.
- Once the report is written and after the councilmember informed the City Manager, City Clerk, and City Attorney, the councilmember submits the report to the City Manager’s Office and City Clerk’s Office to be added to an upcoming

City Council meeting agenda. The report must be submitted by the established due dates to ensure compliance with the City's Sunshine Ordinance (see Sec. 2-150 of the Santa Ana Municipal Code).

Currently, there is no policy approved by the City Council relating to placing councilmember-requested items on the agenda.

Proposed City Council Policy Regarding Councilmember-Requested Items

Based off input provided by members of the City Council at their meetings on August 16, 2022 and March 21, 2023, staff has prepared the attached City Council Policy Regarding Councilmember-Requested Items (Exhibit 2). Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution (Exhibit 1) approving the City Council Policy Regarding Councilmember-Requested Items as presented.

EXHIBIT(S)

1. Resolution
2. City Council Policy Regarding Councilmember-Requested Items

Submitted By: Kristine Ridge, City Manager

Approved By: Kristine Ridge, City Manager